

**REMARKS**

This Reply is responsive to the Office Action dated May 21, 2002. Entry and consideration of the amendments and remarks submitted herein, as well as the election of species, is respectfully requested.

At the outset, Applicants are very grateful to the Examiner for granting the interview of May 8, 2002. In light of the helpful suggestions made therein, claims 1, 15, 16, 22 and 39 have been amended above. Specifically, claims 1, 22 and 39 have been amended to refer to the double-stranded nature of the molecule earlier in the claim while still keeping the phrase "consisting essentially of" in the claim, as the Examiner suggested.

In addition, the Examiner had mentioned that claims 15 and 16 should be amended to correct antecedent basis. Applicants have made the suggested amendments above.

If the amended claim language is not acceptable or if the Examiner notices any other aspects of the claim language in need of clarification, Applicants respectfully request that she telephone the undersigned to work out an agreement on claim language rather than issue another Action. Applicants would greatly appreciate the Examiner's assistance in expediting an allowance of the present application, as this is an extremely important application for which many licenses have been granted and it is imperative that the application be advanced to allowance as quickly as possible.

**Response to Restriction Requirement**

The Office Action dated May 21, 2002, sets forth a restriction between the following groups:

- I. Claims 1-11, 15, 16, 21, 22, 26-35 and 39, drawn to a method of inhibiting the expression of a target gene in a cell in vitro or an invertebrate organism.
- II. Claims 47-51, drawn to a method of inhibiting the expression of a target gene in a vertebrate organism.

Applicants hereby elect Group I, without traverse.

This reply is fully responsive to the Office Action dated May 21, 2002. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is next in order and is respectfully requested.

Except for issue fees payable under 37 CFR §1.18, the commissioner is hereby authorized by this paper to charge any additional fees during the pendency of this application including fees due under 37 CFR §1.16 and 1.17 which may be required, including any required extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 50-0310. This paragraph is intended to be a **CONSTRUCTIVE PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME** in accordance with 37 CFR §1.136(a)(3).

Again, if the Examiner has any further questions relating to this Reply or to the application in general, she is respectfully urged to contact the undersigned by telephone so that allowance of the present application may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 21, 2002

By:



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